

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to you today as a current satellite TV subscriber who would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV. The combination of these two satellite providers will provide numerous benefits to consumers like me, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By merging, the combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable television and can offer more programming choices and, most importantly, all local TV channels in every market in the U.S. I live in a very rural area where local television reception is not very clear if possible. Most days it's nothing but static. Cable does not exist where I live. This means no local news/weather. When it comes to local current events, I'm left in the dark.

DSL is not possible either. With a 56k/V90 modem, I can expect 12-14.4 kbps. On a good day, I can get 21 kbps. That's why I use Starband for my current internet connection. However, I understand that this merger will make my connection more affordable.

Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I urge you to lend your support to this merger.

Please help.

Sincerely,

James G. Kirkpatrick
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